

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BAR-BENCH-MEDIA CONFERENCE

A meeting of the Bar-Bench-Media Conference was held on Wednesday, June 18, 2003 at 12:30 p.m. The members of the Conference participating were:

Members from the Electronic News Media

Chris Carl

Allen Loudell

Members of the Print News Media

Rita Farrell

John Taylor

Members from the Bench

Chief Justice E. Norman Veasey

Members from the Bar

David G. Culley, Esquire

Kathleen Jennings-Hostetter, Esquire

The first agenda item was the approval of the draft minutes from the March 12, 2003 meeting of the Conference. Approval of the minutes was deferred until the Conference's next meeting because a quorum was not present.

Under Old Business, the Conference briefly discussed the status of the proposed Administrative Directive/Rule for Expanded Media Coverage of Trial Court Proceedings. Chief Justice Veasey indicated that the Court would be discussing the proposal at the Court's Administrative Meeting in September. The Chief Justice said that Justice Jacobs, who will be replacing the Chief Justice as the Court's Conference

representative, may be able to report on the status of the proposal at the next Conference meeting.

The next agenda item was the Bar-Bench-Media Dinner with Panel Discussion. The Dinner Committee had not met. It was noted that Dick Kirk, a member of the Dinner Committee, was being replaced by Claire DeMatteis, Esquire as a Conference member. Possible discussion topics were: (1) the Patriot Act, (2) civil liberties in a time of terrorism, (3) security issues, and (4) access issues. The Committee will report back at the next Conference meeting.

President Judge Ridgely told the Conference that the winners of the 2003 Essay Contest had been presented with their checks. The winners were currently making arrangements for their internships. President Judge Ridgely indicated that the Conference needs to attract more entrants by contacting school principals, guidance counselors and social studies teachers. If more responses are not received, the Conference might consider ending the contest.

Under new business, Rita Farrell wanted to discuss the issue of closed court hearings and sealed complaints in the Court of Chancery as well as other courts. She said that the reasons for sealing should be stated in open court, and the Court should permit people objecting to the sealing to be heard. The Conference decided to defer this issue and discuss it at the next meeting.

The Court of Chancery's new jurisdiction on mediation in technology disputes

was the next topic of discussion. The Conference's understanding is that the proceedings would be confidential, and the initial jurisdictional documents would not be available to the public and media. The Conference questioned whether the intent of the statute was to create a secret court. The rules for this mediation process were being developed by a committee chaired by Mike Houghton. The Conference asked Chris Carl to contact Mike and express the Conference's concerns.

The final agenda item was the scheduling of the next Conference meeting. The Conference members present tentatively selected Wednesday, September 24, 2003 at 12:30 p.m. in the Supreme Court Large Conference Room in Wilmington. Lunch will be provided.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

October 7, 2003